

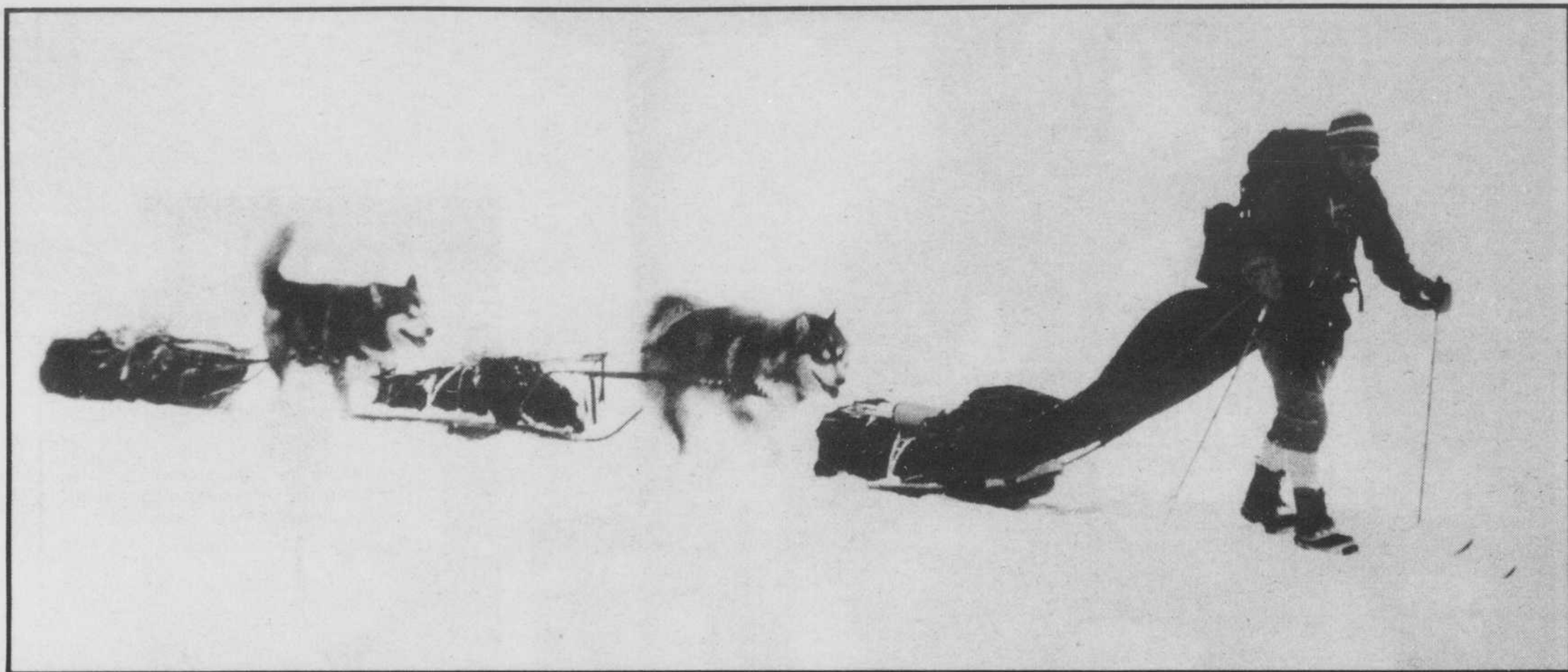


Photo courtesy of Gary Grimm

Training for a ski trek across Antarctica, Katy Flanagan and two Alaskan malamute dogs pull sleds along an Alaskan mountain range.

Local adventurers plan trek to Antarctica

By **LESLIE FARRIS**
Of the Emerald

In an effort to preserve the earth's only uninhabited continent, a group of local adventurers plans to sail to Antarctica and ski across the mainland.

Gary Grimm, coordinator of the University Outdoor Program and originator of the "Antarctica Visions" project, says he expects to complete the journey before the end of the 1980s.

Through the journey and a vigorous educational campaign, Grimm says he hopes to create world interest in the future of Antarctica — specifically, what will happen to the continent after the Antarctic Treaty expires in 1991.

The treaty, signed in 1961 by the United States and 11 other nations with research bases in Antarctica, prohibits the establishment of military bases, the testing of all weapons and the disposal of radioactive waste on the continent.

Other signers of the 30-year treaty include Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, England, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa and the Soviet Union.

"The Antarctic Treaty limited outright ownership of any part of this continent while allowing rival national exploratory

bases to be built," Grimm says. "Rich sources of food and minerals — primarily coal — are being found on Antarctica, and competitive nations are positioning themselves to gain economic advantages when the treaty is reconsidered."

Exploitation of these resources and harm to the environment already is taking place, Grimm says. For example, Japan is taking krill from the sea for consumption in that country. The krill is a shrimp-like crustacean eaten by penguins, squid, fish, whales and other wildlife of Antarctica.

In addition to exploitation, an enormous amount of garbage has been accumulating around the continent's research stations, Grimm says.

"These organizations do not heed the commonly known creed 'If you can pack it in you can pack it out.' Garbage is piling up. When it becomes unsightly, it's buried in the snow, presumably forever.

"This continent is not owned by any nation, corporation or person," Grimm says. "What gives us, with our supposedly superior human brains, the right to destroy this land?"

"We want to challenge the people of this country and other countries to make one visible worldwide attempt to under-

stand a part of our world without exploiting it to the hilt for our own personal gain with no regard for future living creatures."

Grimm says he wants to journey to Antarctica and across the continent without polluting its environment. So he and several other Eugene residents are studying designs for a 50- to 60-foot sailboat.

"Sailing to Antarctica is as big a project in itself as crossing the continent on skis," he says. "But most modern, motorized ships and airplanes seem incongruous with the natural world."

Grimm and his colleagues also are attempting to design ski- and sled-sailing rigs, haul sleds and solar stoves.

"We want to prove that you can still explore the land without making tracks," Grimm says. "This will be an exploration no one has ever accomplished. No one has skied across Antarctica."

"Of course, there is a chance we could perish in an unexpected storm or accident. But I want to feel the wilderness, not just touch it off of some tourist boat or plane."

"It will be an exploration into ourselves as well as into the wild country."

In preparation for the trip, Grimm is

planning several long-distance ski trips in Canada and Alaska and a sailing trip down Alaska's Yukon River and through the Arctic Ocean.

To help finance the expedition, he is arranging Antarctica symposiums with speakers, movies and slides. Grimm and others already have been traveling throughout the Northwest giving original "multi-image concerts" and explaining the Antarctica Visions project.

Although people from all over the world have been contacting him about the project, Grimm says he recognizes that the trip may not be possible at all.

"If we cannot succeed in sailing to Antarctica or skiing across it, perhaps we can use that failure to challenge future human exploitation of this last continent on earth. Perhaps Antarctica is one continent where humans and their technology simply do not belong."

If the expedition does succeed, Grimm says he plans to expand the Antarctica symposiums throughout the United States, utilizing his own experiences and photographs.

In the meantime, he has resigned from the University Outdoor Program to work full time on the Antarctica Visions project.

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